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TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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FY 2009 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE GOALS

The United States Government (USG) and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago (GOTT) enjoy strong bilateral relations and a shared desire for a stable and prosperous Trinidad and Tobago (TT). Crime rates and the trafficking of contraband have risen with an increased level of narcotics transshipment through the country. This is a threat to TT's peace and security, as well as that of the Eastern Caribbean. In the security sector, USG assistance aims to improve border controls, provide technical assistance to the defense and police forces, assist with critical infrastructure protection, and deter acts of terrorism. The USG and GOTT share a common interest in improving border controls and improving security throughout the Caribbean.

HIGHLIGHTS BY PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

Peace and Security

Trinidad and Tobago is situated near the coast of Venezuela at the southern end of the Lesser Antilles, astride major narcotics transshipment routes. Narcotics smugglers and money launderers take advantage of overtaxed law enforcement and border security resources. Providing technical assistance on border security and anti-money-laundering policies is essential to reducing criminal activity. In FY 2009, USG assistance:

- Provided training to 243 defense force and customs officers to improve border security and maintain TT's territorial integrity
- Increased the capacity of customs officers by training them on the detection of fraudulent documents, as well as the provision of 25 digital communication radios

The GOTT works with the USG to disrupt and dismantle organizations engaged in transnational

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crime, potential acts of terrorism, and violent crime. Providing training and equipment to GOTT law enforcement agencies is vital to combating these threats. In FY 2009, USG assistance:

- Provided the TT police force with antiterrorism training in criminal forensics, cellular communications, and proactive internet investigations
- Provided equipment, training, and assistance prior to and during joint operations with law enforcement, resulting in a 43 percent increase in drug trafficking arrests, and the seizure of 158 kilograms of cocaine and 2,092 kilograms of cannabis

The USG is committed to citizen safety as an integral part of peace and security. Providing humanitarian assistance and drug-demand reduction programming is essential to maintaining a healthy society. In FY 2009, USG assistance:

- Conducted two joint humanitarian operations – Continuing Promise and Beyond the Horizons – to provide medical, engineering, and civic affairs services to Trinbagonians
- Funded the national Song and Verse competition that enjoyed the participation of 40 percent of schools in Trinidad and Tobago and over 2000 attendees. The competition promoted a drug-free life style and the importance of education.